



Ashe County

Christmas Tree Association, Inc.

PO Box 966, Jefferson, NC 28640 (336) 846-5850 Fax (336) 846-5882

May 1, 2008

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Ashe County Christmas Tree Association strongly disagrees with the recommendation of the Legislative Program Evaluation Division to close the Upper Mountain Research Station. The Upper Mountain Research Station is the only research station in North Carolina that can conduct Fraser fir Christmas tree research.

The Ashe County Christmas Tree Association (ACCTA) represents 125 Christmas tree farms in Ashe County, North Carolina and produces over \$55 million worth of Christmas trees, wreathes, and garland on 12,000 acres.

In 2007 there were 17 research projects at the Upper Mountain Research Station directly tied to Christmas tree production. The Upper Mountain Research Station has also played a critical role as a facility for pesticide and safety education for farm owners and farm workers.

Groundcover management studies conducted at the Upper Mountain Research Station have been adopted on over 7,500 acres of Christmas trees. Implementation of this research reduces herbicide costs by \$40 per acre per year and reduces fertilizer costs by \$30 per acre per year. The groundcover management research project crafted at the Upper Mountain Research Station is saving Ashe County Christmas tree growers over \$525,000 per year! This groundcover management research is also being used throughout the United States improving farm sustainability, improving the environment, and being highlighted in the National Christmas Tree Association marketing program.

Once again the Ashe County Christmas Tree Association strongly disagrees with the recommendation of the Legislative Program Evaluation Division to close the Upper Mountain Research Station.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Ben III

Andrew Cox

Larry Elliott

Frederic C. Heliot

Nolan Walter

W. H. S. Poe

Ashe County Christmas Tree Association
Board Members

NYA 03 5000

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